

**Claims:**

1. A method for an investor to select and make an investment with an investee, said method comprising:

- a) the investor advertising the amount and term of the investment;
- b) a plurality of investees bidding for the advertised investment during a bidding period, the bidding including indicating a rate of return;
- c) after the bidding period has ended, the investor selecting an investee based at least in part on the bids; and
- d) the investor making the investment with the selected investee.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

- e) after the bidding period has ended and prior to the investor selecting, automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

3. The method according to claim 2, further comprising:

- f) during the bidding period and prior to the investor selecting, automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising:

- g) during the bidding period making the ranking knowable to all bidding investees.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein:

said step of making the investment includes, in order, notifying the selected investee, receiving a signed acknowledgment from the selected investee, and transferring funds to the selected investee.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein:

said steps of advertising and bidding are performed via an Internet web site.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein:

said web site is a secure web site and investors and investees must register to participate.

8. *A method for municipalities and school districts to select and make an investment with banks or financial institutions, said method comprising:*

a) the municipalities and school districts advertising the amount and term of the investments they want to make;

b) the banks and financial institutions bidding for the advertised investments during a bidding period, the bidding including indicating a rate of return;

c) after the bidding period has ended, the municipalities and school districts selecting banks and financial institutions based at least in part on the bids; and

d) the municipalities and school districts making the investments with the selected banks and financial institutions.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:

e) after the bidding period has ended and prior to the municipalities and school districts selecting, automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

10. The method according to claim 9, further comprising:

f) during the bidding period has ended and prior to the municipalities and school districts selecting, automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

11. The method according to claim 10, further comprising:

g) during the bidding period making the ranking knowable to all bidding banks and financial institutions.

12. The method according to claim 8, wherein:

said step of making the investments includes, in order, notifying the selected banks or financial institutions, receiving signed acknowledgments from the selected banks or financial institutions, and transferring funds to the selected banks or financial institutions.

13. The method according to claim 8, wherein:

said steps of advertising and bidding are performed via an Internet web site.

14. The method according to claim 13, wherein:

said web site is a secure web site and municipalities, school districts, banks and financial institutions must register to participate.

15. A method for municipalities and school districts to select and make investments with banks or financial institutions via the Internet, said method comprising:

a) the municipalities and school districts advertising the amount and term of the investments they want to make on a secure web site;

b) the banks and financial institutions bidding for the advertised investments on the web site during a bidding period, the bidding including indicating a rate of return;

c) after the bidding period has ended, the municipalities and school districts selecting, via the web site, banks and financial institutions based at least in part on the bids; and

d) the municipalities and school districts making the investments with the selected banks and financial institutions.

16. The method according to claim 15, further comprising:

e) after the bidding period has ended and prior to the municipalities and school districts selecting, automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

17. The method according to claim 16, further comprising:

f) during the bidding period and prior to the municipalities and school districts selecting, automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

18. The method according to claim 17, further comprising:

g) during the bidding period making the ranking knowable to all bidding banks and financial institutions via the web site.

19. The method according to claim 15, wherein:

said step of making the investment includes, in order, notifying the selected bank or financial institution via email, receiving a signed acknowledgment from the selected bank or financial institution via fax or email, and transferring funds to the selected bank or financial institution by wire transfer.

20. A system for an investor to select and make an investment with an investee, said system comprising:

- a secure server coupled to the Internet, said secure server including
  - a) means for receiving investment information from the investor, said investment information including the amount and term of the investment;
  - b) means for advertising at least some of the investment information via the Internet;
  - c) means for accepting bids for the advertised investment from investees via the Internet during a bidding period, the bids including a rate of return; and
  - d) means for displaying the bids via the Internet to the investor.

21. The system according to claim 20, said secure server further including:

- e) means for receiving a bid selection from the investor via the Internet; and
- f) means for notifying the investee via the Internet of the bid selection.

22. The system according to claim 21, said secure server further including:

- g) means for automatically ranking bids according to rate of return.

23. The system according to claim 22, said secure server further including:

- h) means for making the ranking knowable via the Internet to all bidding investees during the bidding period.

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